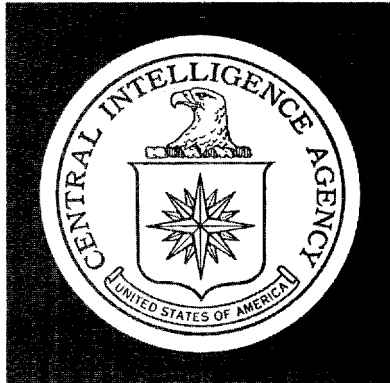


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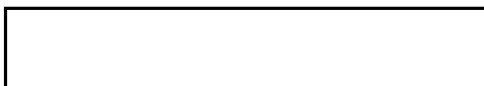
MEMORANDUM

The Situation in Vietnam

Top Secret

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16 November 1967



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Information as of 1600

16 November 1967

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HIGHLIGHTS

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I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam:
Dak To Airfield, the scene of four mortar attacks on 15 November, was hit again on 16 November with 43 rounds (Paras. 1-3).

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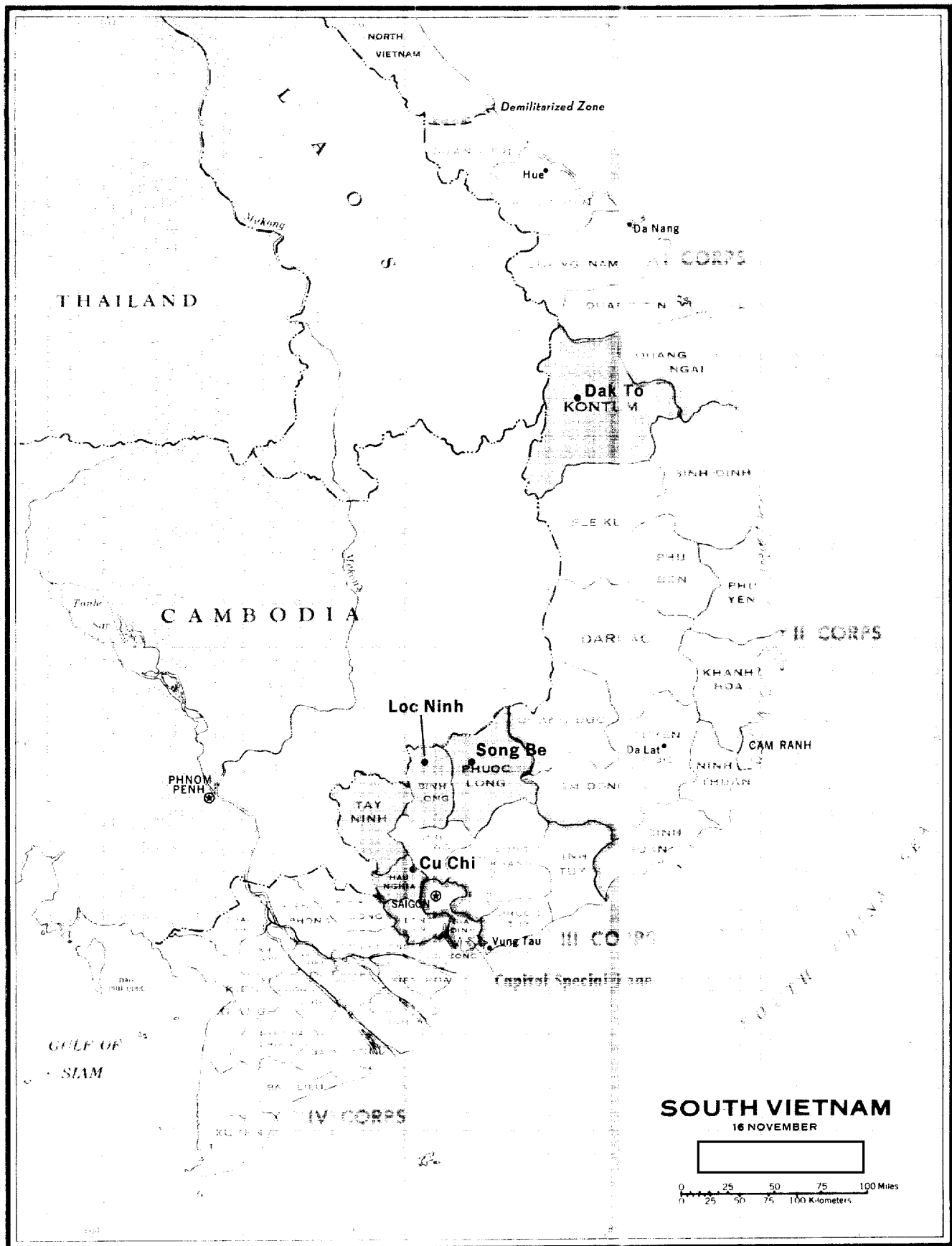
II. Political Developments in South Vietnam:
The Senate has begun to bog down in approving rules presented by the rules committee, and the process may continue into December (Para. 1). Saigon has postponed the execution of three terrorists (Para. 2).

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IV. Other Communist Military Developments:
There is nothing of significance to report.

V. Communist Political Developments: Premier Pham Van Dong has reaffirmed Hanoi's standard position on several of the key questions related to the war and voiced the Vietnamese Communists' determination to fight on (Paras. 1-3).

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I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. Dak To Airfield, the scene of four enemy mortar attacks totaling some 90 rounds on 15 November, was hit the following day with a 43-round barrage. Little damage was done on the 16th, however. The attacks on the 15th killed 20 Americans and wounded 22 in addition to destroying two heavy transport planes and igniting ammunition dumps. US artillery, helicopter gunships, and jet aircraft fired on suspected enemy firing positions throughout the past two days.

2. US casualties in the two weeks of fighting in the Dak To area now stand at 121 killed and over 600 wounded. Approximately 700 Communists have been killed.

3. US forces fanning out south and west of Dak To have not encountered significant resistance for the past three days, indicating that the North Vietnamese 32nd and 66th regiments may be withdrawing to reorganize and resupply. The recent mortar attacks on Dak To could be intended to cover this withdrawal. The appearance of the North Vietnamese 24th Regiment north of Dak To--where South Vietnamese units reported heavy enemy fire during the past three days--indicates that the focus of the Dak To fighting may shift to this sector.

4. Sharp fighting was reported on 15 November northwest of Saigon. Enemy gunners launched a heavy mortar attack on the base camp of the US 25th Infantry Division at Cu Chi, 18 miles northwest of Saigon. Other 25th Division troops reported heavy fighting farther north in Tay Ninh Province. Eighteen US soldiers were killed at Cu Chi and 14 died in the Tay Ninh action. Scattered fighting also continued far to the north in the central I Corps area, where 13 North Vietnamese regulars and seven US soldiers of the Americal Division were killed.

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II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. After an auspicious start, the Senate has begun to move more slowly in approving rules drafted by the rules committee. Plenary sessions on 11 and 14 November were devoted to consideration of only nine articles, all dealing with the duties of the Senate's standing committees. Forty-one articles have now been approved, and approximately 150 remain. Some optimistic senators had earlier estimated that all the rules could be approved within two weeks, but it now appears likely that the process will continue into December.

Front Threatens Retaliation If Terrorists Executed

2. The South Vietnamese Government has ordered a stay for three Viet Cong terrorists scheduled to be executed on 17 November. The Liberation Front in a statement broadcast by Hanoi had threatened previously to take "appropriate acts of retaliation" if the executions were carried out. A similar threat was raised by the Front last June when the same three terrorists were scheduled to be put to death. At that time, however, the Front named FSO "Major" Douglas Ramsey and the late Gustav Hertz as objects of such retaliation. In addition to threatening language, the Front in the present statement contrasted the Saigon government's action with the Front's recent release of three American prisoners.

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IV. OTHER COMMUNIST MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

1. There is nothing of significance to report.

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V. COMMUNIST POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

1. North Vietnamese Premier Pham Van Dong, in a recent interview with a reporter from the French periodical Le Nouvel Observateur, reaffirmed Hanoi's standard position on several key questions related to the war and voiced the Vietnamese Communists' determination to continue the struggle until "ultimate victory." In his remarks, carried in the 15 November issue of the magazine, the premier insisted that the "four points" remained the basis for any settlement of the conflict and explained that Hanoi's demand for an "unconditional cessation of the bombing" means that the Vietnamese will never negotiate under the threat of bombs.

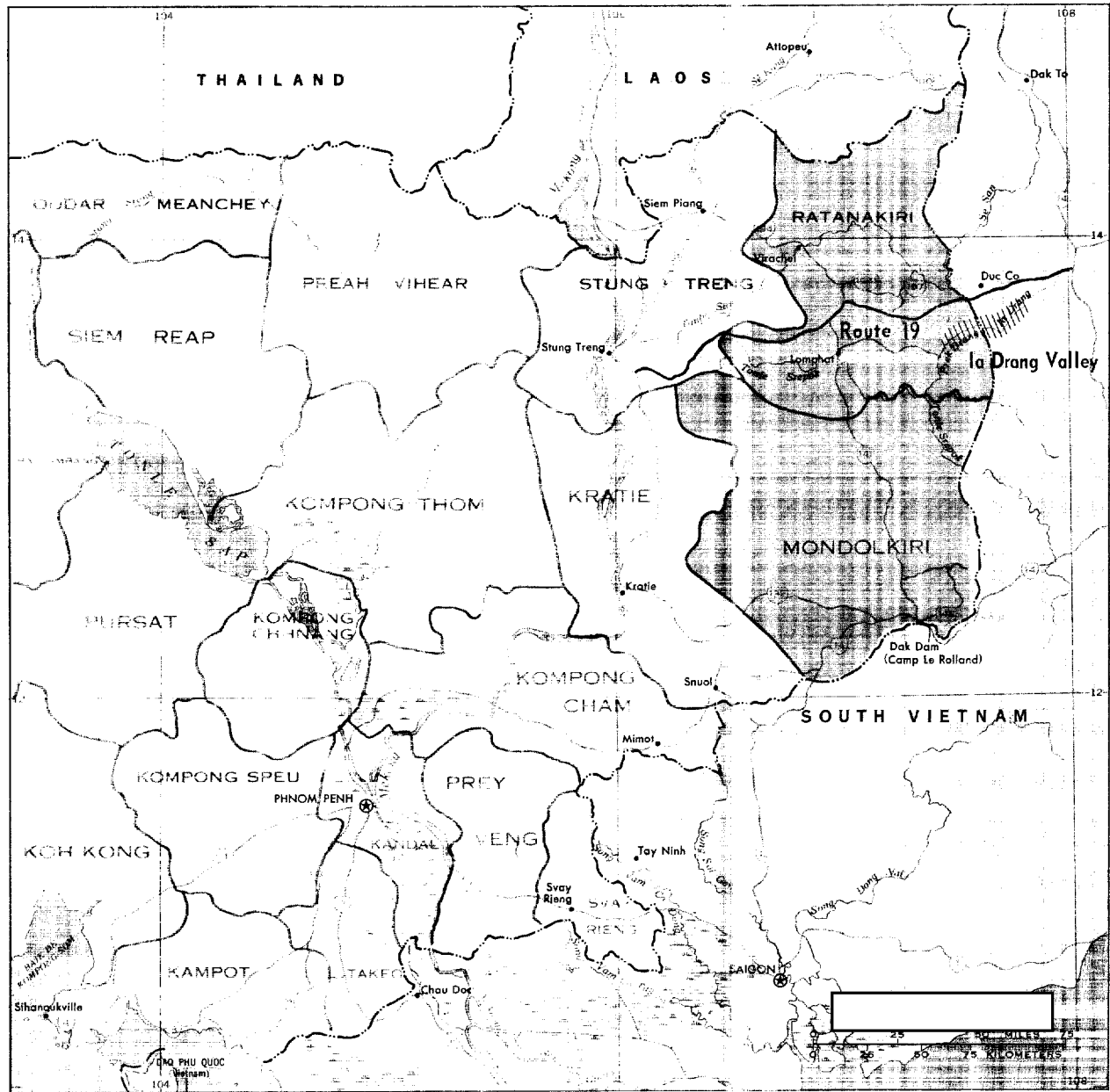
2. In response to a question about Ambassador Goldberg's recent remarks, the premier ruled out any UN action in the war, but he made no specific reference to Goldberg's suggestion that the Liberation Front might participate in a Security Council discussion of the conflict. The premier also underscored the importance of the Liberation Front's new political program and again emphasized that the Front is "the sole authentic representative of the South Vietnamese people."

3. The remainder of the premier's remarks were devoted to defending the Communist position on the Vietnam conflict. He conceded that the days ahead will undoubtedly be more difficult, but he insisted, "it does not matter, our people will pursue the war until victory, regardless of the duration or its cost."

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